

can agree so we can make progress for our country.

This Congress has racked up a growing list of bipartisan accomplishments for the American people over the past year. Some thought the major reforms we passed in areas such as education, transportation, Medicare, and tax relief were all impossible in the current political climate. We proved those pundits wrong. We showed how significant bipartisan accomplishments can be achieved when good policy is the goal.

Perhaps we have inspired the President to finally try his hand at bipartisan achievement as well. We will see tonight when he delivers his last State of the Union Address. If he proposes real plans to do things such as defeat ISIL, grow economic opportunity, and strengthen the middle class—plans actually designed to pass this Congress, not just provide talking points for the next campaign—we will know he is ready to join us in meeting the challenges of tomorrow because Republicans aren't afraid of the future, and we don't think President Obama should be either. We want him to join us in recognizing the challenges of today while working for the solutions of tomorrow. It is true that we as a nation have a lot of challenges to confront. The pain and the worry in our country is real, it is palpable, but none of it is insurmountable.

That is the hopeful message I expect Governor Haley to deliver tonight. I expect her to contrast a failing Presidency that is stuck in the past with a Republican Party that is oriented to the future. Nikki Haley knows the American dream. She has lived the American dream. She believes in the continuing promise of our country, and she understands the importance of opportunity and upward mobility for our middle class. When Governor Haley talks about hope and change, she means it because she has actually worked to deliver it.

There is nothing wrong with inspirational speeches. We all need to be inspired, especially in trying times such as these. Soaring rhetoric matched with the right policies and hard work to actually achieve them is usually good for our country—just ask Ronald Reagan or Jack Kemp. Empty eloquence wrapped in leftwing ideas of yesterday that hurt the middle class—it is time to leave that behind. It is time to look to the future. We will see tonight if President Obama is ready to do so and move beyond the failed policies of the past.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

THE PRESIDENT'S LEADERSHIP

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if this were a card game, which it is not, I guess what I would do is trump what the Re-

publican leader has said. My friend lives in a world that doesn't exist. Let's talk about this person named Barack Obama. What has happened under his time in office, his 7 years, in spite of the unheard of, unrecognizable Senate that the Republicans have created—cloture had to be filed more than 500 times because they set out to block everything he wanted—in spite of that, the state of the Union now reflects the last 7 years. We have 14 million private sector jobs that have been created. During the Obama years, the economy has grown. The private sector created jobs for 70 straight months—the longest stretch in the history of our country. Unemployment is at 5 percent. When Barack Obama took office, in some States it was as much as 14 percent.

During the years of Barack Obama, 17 million uninsured Americans have gained access to health care—17 million—and the number is climbing. Renewable energy production has increased significantly. You drive across America today and you see wind farms in the middle part of this country, and farmers make more money from producing energy on their farms than they do harvesting corn and soybeans because of what the President suggested and what we legislated in the so-called stimulus bill.

Solar, wind, and geothermal has increased significantly, and it will continue to grow more because they have tax incentives now for as long as 7 additional years. You know what else we have done—not enough. The wealthiest Americans who don't mind paying more than their fair share—the only people in America today who believe that these rich people shouldn't pay a little more are the Republicans in Congress, not Republicans around the country, so we made sure the wealthiest pay a little bit more.

We have secured permanent tax relief that will help lift 16 million lower income, middle-income families out of poverty. The auto industry was on the brink of destruction. General Motors, this icon of American industry, was begging for help. Chrysler Motors was begging for help. The Republicans said no. We Democrats said yes. We were right. Republicans were wrong. Hundreds of thousands of jobs have been created in the auto industry. Last year more American cars and trucks were sold than any time in the history of our country. Why? Because of Barack Obama's leadership.

Osama bin Laden is gone. He has been killed, and we destroyed and degraded terrorist organizations in our Nation. We have more to do. Of course we do.

There have been historic agreements on climate change. We have stopped Iran from getting access to nuclear weapons. Within the last few days, Iran has shipped 12 tons of uranium out of Iran because of Barack Obama. While we have a lot more to do for America on behalf of the American people, we

can't ignore the progress that has been made.

My friend talks about the new Senate, and there is a new Senate because there is a constructive minority. We Democrats have been willing to work with them. The issues that we have been able to pass with rare exception have been issues that we should have passed years ago but we couldn't because Republicans filibustered and obstructed everything we tried to do.

I repeat: We have a lot more to do for the American people. It is a wonderful country, and I am so pleased with the progress we have made during the 7 years of Barack Obama.

Mr. President, I see no one on the floor. Please state the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the first hour equally divided, and with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the final half.

The Senator from Missouri.

FLOODING IN MISSOURI

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I want to talk for a few minutes at the beginning of my remarks about what the response to the flooding has been in our State of Missouri. I was in St. Louis County with Congresswoman WAGNER on Saturday. I was in St. Charles County the week before that. I was in Cape Girardeau following up on the work Congressman SMITH has done there. I was in St. Genevieve, Perryville, Cassville, and Monette. If you know anything about the geography of our State, those places are spread pretty far apart, but we had a flooding situation that was almost totally generated in our State—different from the floods we normally deal with—and the communities reacted with very little time in an impressive way. The Corps of Engineers was also there to help. The National Guard was there to do what they needed to do. Now we see FEMA and the SBA stepping in to see who qualifies for assistance.

There was loss of life. More often than not, the loss of life occurred when somebody drove around a sign that said "Don't pass this sign" and then got caught in a situation they didn't anticipate or thought was less than it turned out to be. Some families clearly are grieving that loss of life. We had five international soldiers who lost their lives near Fort Leonard Wood.

Maybe the whole idea of a low-water bridge that you and I would be used to was something they hadn't thought about.

We had three interstate highways close—Interstate 55, Interstate 70, and Interstate 44. They were not all closed at exactly the same time but within somewhere between a 24- to 36-hour timeframe. We will have to look at that to be sure people don't lose access to where their kids are, where their jobs are, and where their health care is. The economic impact of that Interstate System that comes together in so many ways in Missouri shutting down is something that clearly, once we get beyond the immediacy of dealing with the flood itself, we need to look at and see how we can prevent that problem from happening again. I don't know of a time when any two of those highways were closed at the same time before, but I know Interstate 70 and Interstate 44 were closed at the same time, and it had a real impact economically on people traveling east to west or economic things happening east to west anywhere in the country.

HEALTH CARE RESEARCH, MENTAL HEALTH, AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I was also able to talk about some good news. I am not sure how much good news we are going to hear over the next few days, but certainly there is the good news of stepping up and looking at health care research and the impact it can have in the country. There are things that are beginning to happen in mental health and things that we are trying to do to respond to prescription drug abuse and opioid abuse in all areas.

In health care research, the National Institutes of Health hadn't received an increase in their research funding since 2003. There was an effort made right before that to make a substantial increase. The fact that the Congress and the administration stopped research funding had always been frustrating, but we were able to see an increase this year for the first time in 12 years. That meant we had to create a priority. For too many people in government, when there is a discussion about funding priorities, a lot of our colleagues hear that and think that means we have to fund anything anybody has ever convinced the government we are interested in. Being interested in something doesn't make it a priority; it just makes it something that, if everything was going along the right way, maybe this is something to look at. But in funding NIH at a new level, we totally eliminated 18 programs, zeroed them out. We didn't eliminate the authorization for them, but we eliminated the money to run those 18 programs. Congress and eventually the President accepted the argument that for the greater good, these 18 programs did not need to continue. The President asked for 23

new programs that also did not receive funding, but that allowed us to make a commitment and to set priorities.

Why set a priority? The first funding increase in 12 years was 6.6 percent. We went from spending \$30 billion on health care research last year to \$32 billion this year. Hopefully this is a first step toward trying to solve health care problems.

There are many changing developments in health care, from smartphone technology, to individual medicine, to knowing more about the human genome. How did we find out about the human genome? We found that out through NIH research. If we hadn't had NIH research, it is likely that the human genome would still be a mystery to us. It had been a mystery on the planet until just a few years ago. The reason that happened was the National Institutes of Health and the Congress decided it would be helpful to figure out how all of us are different from each other, which also means trying to figure out a different approach to curing diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, and heart disease.

What difference does it make? Why is it a priority to spend taxpayers' money in this way? One reason is the clear impact health care research is having every day on individuals and families who no longer are dealing with problems they would have been dealing with 10 years ago. Moving forward, let's see if we can find ways to meet the challenges for families and caregivers. Let's see what we can do there.

Generally, for taxpayers, even if you aren't the individual beneficiary, estimates are that the Medicare system will be absolutely overwhelmed between now and 2050 by things such as Alzheimer's and cancer. If we can figure out a cure or delay onset of Alzheimer's by 5 or 7 years on average, the impact on the cost of that devastating disease—both the real cost to taxpayers and the emotional and psychological costs to everybody involved—will be overwhelming.

The Medicare system won't be able to withstand the projections of how much money will be spent if we don't find ways to deal with these new challenges. As people get older, Alzheimer's and cancer are more likely to end life than heart disease and stroke. That doesn't mean we don't need to be focused on neurological research or on heart research. All of those things are important, and a relatively small investment by the Federal Government on health care to try to do something about that matters.

It is generally understood that health care will dramatically change in the next 10 or 20 years. Where the research is done is likely to be where the jobs and economic impact of that research occurs.

I don't want to be going to the Chinese 10 years from now saying: Will you tell us how your investment in research has paid off? We are better at this than anybody else in the world,

and we need to continue to be better. There are reasons for us to be better.

I do visit some of the places where this research is being done. I was at the Siteman Cancer Center on the campus of Washington University, one of the premier cancer focus centers in the country. Washington University is where one-third of all research was done to understand the human genome.

I have met with the Alzheimer's Association and the American Cancer Association.

I met with the family of a young man who lost his fight with cancer before he was 10 years old. His mom and dad formed the Super Sam Foundation to encourage other families and to encourage research. They were there with his sister representing the Super Sam Foundation.

The Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment Disorders at the University of Missouri is another place where we are looking to see what we can do to intervene earlier and help solve problems. The new chancellor at the university, Hank Foley, was with me, as was the director of that center, Dr. Stephen Kanne. They are doing good work and will continue to do so.

In Kansas City, I met with an organization, MRIGlobal, that is doing incredible work in the field of environmental and cancer research and is making a big difference. The head of that company, Thomas Sack, was there as we were talking about what they were doing and what they hoped to do.

My hometown of Springfield is also the home location of the Alzheimer's Association Missouri Chapter. I had a chance to talk with them.

I also met with the people from the Alzheimer's Association, the American Cancer Society, the American Diabetes Association, and I then went on to Southeast Missouri State University, another autism center that is working to figure out how we can deal with autism disorders, including early detection.

I visited Truman State University in Kirksville, where I had the opportunity to learn more about the university's efforts to create an interprofessional autism clinic. I was able to hear stories about how frustrated young researchers have been with just a 6.6-percent increase—the first increase in 12 years. During that 12 years, the buying power of the research dollar went down by 20 percent. We restored a little of that 20 percent.

The Federal Government has been involved in research at least since the founding of the Department of Agriculture in 1862. Whether it is health care research or ag research or environmental research or energy research, there is a level of that research which should and will be done by the private sector, but there is another level of research by the Federal Government that benefits everybody by sharing the results of that research.

In mental health, there is a lot of excitement in Missouri and around the